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The Weekly Reader

Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)

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# Teaching Circles, Circles of Trust, Global Circles

John Bird

Winthrop University, [birdj@winthrop.edu](mailto:birdj@winthrop.edu)

Teaching and Learning Center

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# The Weekly Reader

Teaching and Learning Center, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC

## UpComing Sessions

FERPA Training  
9/11, 9/12, 9/19  
MOOCs and  
Their Impact  
9/17  
Breast Health  
9/17  
Preparing for  
Emergencies  
9/18  
GLI Conference  
9/20  
Teaching Circles  
9/20  
Training for CMS  
Authors 9/25  
Blackboard  
Training  
(various)  
Register at:  
<http://www2.winthrop.edu/tlc/TrainingCalendar/default.asp>

Dr. John Bird  
Professor,  
Department of  
English  
Bancroft Hall 260  
(803) 323-3679

Director, Teaching &  
Learning Center  
Dinkins Hall 233  
(803) 323-2447

EMAIL:  
[birdj@winthrop.edu](mailto:birdj@winthrop.edu)

Winthrop University

## Teaching Circles, Circles of Trust, Global Circles

I wrote about the circle game a few weeks ago. I suppose circles are on my mind, since they come up in two contexts this week, perhaps related, although coincidentally.

First is the return of Teaching Circles, a popular TLC program we are bringing back. You may remember it as Teaching Squares, but we decided to rename it, since the groups do not always contain four members (although four is an optimal number). In Teaching Circles, you are joined by three or so other faculty members, preferably from disciplines other than your own. You observe the teaching of each member in your circle, and they observe you. Near the end of the semester, you meet to discuss your observations.

Participants have found Teaching Circles to be helpful, interesting, engaging, and enlightening. Circle members report that they discovered new teaching methods, techniques, and styles, discoveries that

subsequently enhanced their own teaching. All feedback is non-judgmental, with an emphasis on the positive. Try Teaching Circles if you have not, and come back if you have. Email Dana Bruneau ([bruneaud@winthrop.edu](mailto:bruneaud@winthrop.edu)) to express your interest, and the TLC will form appropriate circles. So we can get things started, email by Friday, September 20.

Circles came up again when I was browsing for books about teaching and learning. Such browsing used to involve me getting up and walking over to Dacus Library, then roaming the aisles in the LB section, where most of these books are housed. We now have many more books as ebooks in our holdings, and I am trying to get up to digital speed. I have an old school preference for "book books": I love to roam the library stacks or the bookstore shelves, searching and finding, serendipitously; I love the smell of books, the feel of

book covers, the look of print. But I also recognize the financial and usage advantages of electronic books, so I am forcing myself to embrace the future, or actually, the present.

To that end, I did the electronic equivalent of browsing, typing in "teaching and learning" in the keyword search on Dacus Library Online, under "ebooks." A few books caught my eye, but the one I landed on and opened up, virtually, was *Teaching and Learning From the Inside Out: Revitalizing Ourselves and Our Institutions*, ed. Margaret Golden, Wiley Periodicals, 2102. Both the title and subtitle caught my eye, perhaps even more starkly than they would have if I were browsing the stacks. This collection of essays applies something called the Circle of Trust Approach to teaching and learning, from an organization called The Center for Courage and Renewal.

*"Touchy-feely hippie stuff! But the outline appeals to me, as you might be able to tell from past issues of The Weekly Reader. A cursory reading of the first chapter and a quick scan of the other chapters makes me think I will find something of value here."*



## Continued from page 1

Circles again! I see a pattern emerging.

The first chapter outlines the Principles of the Circle of Trust Approach:

- Everyone has an inner teacher.
- Inner work requires solitude and community.
- Inner work must be invitational.
- Our lives move in cycles like the seasons.
- An appreciation of paradox enriches our lives and helps us hold greater complexity.
- We live with greater integrity when we see ourselves whole.
- A "hidden wholeness" underlies our own lives.

Touchy-feely hippie stuff! But the outline appeals to me, as you might be able to tell from past issues of *The Weekly Reader*. A cursory reading of the first chapter and a quick scan of the other chapters makes me think I will find something of value here.

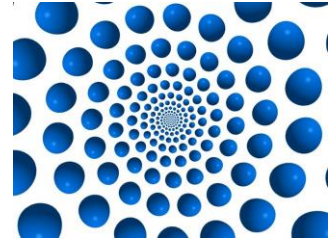
And then an idea came to me. In the past few years,

I have occasionally highlighted various teaching and learning books. I always ended my mini-reviews with the words, "Available in Dacus Library, as soon as I return it." If my overview sparked two or three people to read the book, the second and third people would be out of luck. But not with ebooks!

A good number of us can read an ebook at the same time. (There are some limitations, but I think it works that way.) If what I have described so far appeals to your inner hippie too, I urge you to go to the library webpage and check the book out (virtually). I am going to write about the first chapter next week, and then if I feel like continuing, I may pick another chapter or two to zoom in on. We can have our own book circle, meeting without meeting, the paradox of solitude and community. Another circle!

And yet another circle: the GLI Conference on Friday, September 20 from 2:00-5:00 will bring together a number of us who are interested in global learning. There will be interesting topics and sessions. Go to the TLC page to register. The globe is the biggest circle of them all—at least on

this planet. Cosmic vibes, man, cosmic vibes...



## XXITE 2.0 ----- The Virtual Gathering Place for WU (The Reboot!)

Jo Koster and I invite you to join XXITE (Twenty-first Century Teaching Excellence)—or if you have already joined, to check it out again as it grows and develops. Maybe you have not been there in a long time—if not, you will see many changes in look and content. For example, XXITE now has groups dedicated to HMXP and CRTW, with

those of us who teach those courses sharing ideas and materials. Talk to Jo about setting up your own interest group. Jo is particularly interested in recruiting a few people to blog regularly about their teaching.

Jo set up this interactive site to give Winthrop faculty a virtual gathering space to share ideas about teaching and

technology. You'll find blogs and discussion forums on various topics—and we urge you to add your own ideas. Visit again at <http://wuxxite.ning.com/> Or email Jo Koster for an invitation to join: [kosterj@winthrop.edu](mailto:kosterj@winthrop.edu) The TLC website also has links to navigate your way there or to join: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/tlc/>



## A New Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The Teaching and Learning Center is offering a new service: teaching consultation. At the instructor's request, I (or another agreed-upon person) will visit your class to observe and consult with you afterwards about your successes and challenges. This consultation has nothing to do with the tenure and

promotion process, and no reports will be made to department chairs or deans (unless you so request). The invitation to the consultant can only come from the instructor, not from a dean or chair or any other person. All conversations will be private and confidential. If you don't want me to visit your class and observe your teaching, we could

just meet and talk about your teaching. If I am not available to visit your class because of my schedule, I will find a qualified person to do the consulting. So please let me know if you would like to invite me into your class or for a consultation. Call or email me at (803) 323-3679 or [birdj@winthrop.edu](mailto:birdj@winthrop.edu).

Join XXITE 2.0 or  
Register for a TLC  
Session

At

[www.winthrop.edu/tlc](http://www.winthrop.edu/tlc)

## Go2Knowledge—Learning On Demand!

Go2Knowledge is a website that offers a variety of video presentations on faculty and staff professional development. You will find presentations by nationally-known experts in seven categories: At-Risk Populations, Campus Safety, Organizational Development, Student Success, Teaching and Learning, Technology,

and Open Educational Resources. Within each category, you will find a number of excellent and informative videos. The Office of Academic Affairs has provided us a one-year subscription to this service.

People often tell the TLC that they would like to go to sessions, but they don't have the time or they can't

at the times sessions are offered. With Go2Knowledge, you can attend sessions on demand, anywhere, 24/7. The TLC will also have frequent Go2Knowledge Groups, where we meet to discuss a presentation. Log in here: <http://www.go2knowledge.org/winthrop> See you there!

## Thought for The Week

*"Circles create soothing space, where even reticent people can realize their voice is welcome."  
—Margaret J. Wheatley*